

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Supplemental to the amendments to the specification made in the October 13, 2005 Amendment and the April 12, 2006 Preliminary Amendment, please replace the Summary of Invention section on page 1, line 16 through page 9, line 9 with the following amended section:

--According to one aspect of the invention, an image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of external printing apparatuses via a network, includes: (1) generation means for reading an image and generating an image signal; (2) selection means for selecting one from the plurality of external printing apparatuses; (3) ~~input instruction reception means for receiving an input instruction indicating whether or not the input of user management information is necessary from the selected external printing apparatus~~ determination means for determining whether or not the selected external printing apparatus needs input user management information; (4) input control means for controlling the input of the user management information so as to be ~~inputted in accordance with the instruction , when the result of the determination indicates~~ affirmative; (5) output means for outputting the inputted user management information to the selected external printing apparatus; (6) reception means for receiving, from the selected external printing apparatus, availability information indicating whether or not the using of the selected external printing apparatus is allowed, wherein the availability information is determined based on the output of the user management information; and (7) transmission control means for controlling transmission such that the generated image signal is transmitted to the selected external printing apparatus, ~~in accordance with~~ when the availability information indicates affirmative.

According to another aspect of the present invention, an image reading method for controlling an image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of external printing apparatuses via a network, includes the steps of: (1) reading an image and generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image; (2) selecting one from the plurality of external printing apparatuses; (3) ~~receiving an input instruction indicating whether or not the input of user management information is necessary from the selected external printing apparatus~~ determining whether or not the selected external printing apparatus needs input of user management information; (4) controlling the input of the user management information so as to be inputted ~~in accordance with the instruction~~ when the result of the determination made in said determining step indicates affirmative; (5) outputting the inputted user management information to the selected external printing apparatus; (6) receiving from the selected external printing apparatus, availability information indicating whether or not the using of the selected external printing apparatus is allowed, wherein the availability information is determined based on the output of the user management information; and (7) controlling transmission such that the generated image signal is transmitted to the selected external printing apparatus, ~~in accordance with~~ when the availability information indicates affirmative.

According to still another aspect of the present invention, a computer readable memory storing a program executing an image reading method for controlling an image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of external printing apparatuses via a network, the program including: (1) code for reading an image and generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image; (2) code for selecting one from the plurality of external printing apparatuses; (3) code for ~~receiving an input instruction indicating whether or not the input of user management~~

~~information is necessary from the selected external printing apparatus~~ determining whether or not  
the selected external printing apparatus needs input of user management information; (4) code for  
controlling the input of the user management information so as to be inputted ~~in accordance with~~  
~~the instruction~~ when the result of the determination made by said code for said determining step  
indicates affirmative; (5) code for outputting the inputted user management information to the  
selected external printing apparatus;(6) code for receiving from the selected external printing  
apparatus, availability information indicating whether or not the using of the selected external  
printing apparatus is allowed, wherein the availability information is determined based on the  
output of the user management information; and (7) code for controlling transmission such that  
the generated image signal is transmitted to the selected external printing apparatus, ~~in accordance~~  
~~with~~ when the availability information indicates affirmative.

The foregoing and other objects, advantages and features of the present  
invention will become more apparent from the following description of the preferred embodiments  
taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.--